

so that data can be entered into the National Crime Information Center's (NCIC) Missing Person File. However, states are not required to report information to the NCIC's Unidentified Person File when they recover an unidentified body. Unfortunately, a logical and complete cross-referencing of the Missing Person File and the Unidentified Person File simply does not exist.***STRPGFIT***

Every week, unidentified deceased children are found, yet their families may never know and may never stop their difficult search. The families are denied the sense of closure to their tragic loss, at least knowing that their child was no longer missing. In late December, the body of GiGi Arnett Harris was found in a morgue, where it had lain unidentified for two years. Stories like that of Ms. Harris would not occur if Jennifer's Law is enacted.

Jennifer's Law would correct this problem by requiring that states report to the NCIC information on unidentified persons that they find in their jurisdiction. It would also require that the FBI modernize the Missing Persons File and the Unidentified Persons File to make the lists compatible for cross-referencing.

It's time to bring comfort to families of missing children in their suffering. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this very important legislation.

IN HONOR OF NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 22, 1998

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to speak out in favor of an extremely worthwhile and important piece of legislation—H.R. 2850, the Jennifer's Law Act.***STRPGFIT***

This bill would require states to report missing children information to the National Crime Information Center so that it can be entered into a missing person database. Missing person files are already sent to the FBI and, as we all know, two heads, or two agencies in this case, are better than one when it comes to finding missing and abducted kids.

In my congressional district alone, 68 missing children have been reported since 1994. Typically, these children are illegally abducted by a family member or a stranger, run away from home, or became lost. Thankfully, the vast majority of the children in my area were found, according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. However, 5 children are still missing, and that is 5 kids too many.

Congress needs to do everything possible to find these five youngsters, as well as thou-

sands of others from around the country. I urge my colleagues to support Jennifer's Law Act to enhance federal and state authorities access to data that may reunite families with their missing children.

STARK RELEASES MEMO FROM MEDICARE ACTUARIES, SHOWS WE CAN SAVE MEDICARE WITHOUT RADICAL SURGERY

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 22, 1998

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, in response to a number of questions I submitted last fall, I have received the following memo from the Office of the Chief Actuary of the Medicare agency.***STRPGFIT***

I asked what effect various options for spending restraints or increased revenues would have on the long-term outlook for the Medicare Trust Fund. The Actuary's memo makes it clear that we can solve Medicare's long-term problems without radical change.

A lot of politicians and editorial writers cry that the sky is falling because of the coming retirement of the Baby Boom generation. The Actuaries show that with a variety of reasonable changes, Medicare will be there for our children and grandchildren.

The memo shows that with reasonable controls on hospitals and doctor inflation and very small tax changes, we can easily solve Medicare's financial problems between now and 2022, and solve more than half the 1998–2072 problem. For example, a three year freeze on hospital payment inflation would cut the short-term problem in half and the 75 year budget shortfall by one-quarter. A freeze is doable, because the Medicare Payment Advisory Committee (MedPAC) reports that at current rates, in 2003 hospital Medicare payment profits are likely to be about 15%—far more than we should be paying.

As another alternative, if we donated half the tobacco settlement to the Medicare Trust Fund and saved the next decade's budget surpluses for Medicare, we would keep the Hospital Trust Fund solvent way past 2020.

We don't need tax increases. If we just save the pending surpluses for Medicare, instead of dribbling them away, we can solve Medicare's problems over the next twenty years.

A proposal to hold Hospital Trust Fund spending to the growth in the Medicare population plus the per capita growth in Gross Domestic Product, would solve half the long-term financial problems of the Trust Fund. Holding health inflation to this level will be tough, unless private sector health inflation is held to similar levels—but we should try. The fat and

waste in the health care system is extraordinary, and we should make this our goal.

The Office of Actuary estimates also show that the Stark-Moynihan Medicare Early Access bill (HR 3470, 3471) allowing people to buy into Medicare as early as age 55 would be revenue neutral over the next 25 years and then actually improve the Trust Fund because of the bill's anti-fraud provisions.

People who want to abolish Medicare and privatize all government programs are trying to scare Americans into believing Medicare can't be saved. Take a look at these budget estimates: these are reasonable changes that we can and should make. With additional savings we should even be able to improve the existing program to provide a pharmaceutical benefit.***STRPGFIT***

MEMORANDUM,

May 15, 1998.

From: Sol Mussey, Director, Medicare and Medicaid Cost Estimates Group, Office of the Actuary, HCFA

Subject: Estimated Long-Range Financial Impact of Selected HI Proposals

The attached table provides estimates for several proposals designed to help reduce the Hospital Insurance (HI) program's long-range actuarial deficit. The attached table provides the 25-year, 50-year, and 75-year impacts on the actuarial balance, together with the resulting balances themselves.

The attached is based on the 1998 Trustees Report, intermediate assumptions, and consequently include the effects of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. Each line of the table represents the actuarial balances under current law modified for that particular proposed only. No request was made at this time for any combination of proposals. In practice, the financial impact of a legislative package made up of several of these proposals would not necessarily equal the sum of the individual impacts, due to potential interactions among provisions.

The estimates shown for the age 62 buy-in proposal are based on the proposal in the President's 1999 Budget. Since the proposal in the short run is to be financed by other savings proposals in the budget, we included the effects of these other proposals. Hence, the 25-year effect on the actuarial balance is zero. However, the buy-in proposal becomes self-financing after about 20 years and the savings from the other proposals in the budget are assumed to continue. Therefore, there is some positive effect on the actuarial balance for the 50- and 75-year projection periods. The center of excellence proposal is also included in the President's 1999 Budget.

As is always the case with long-range financial estimates, the impacts shown for the attached proposals are subject to considerable uncertainty. Actual future effects could differ substantially from these estimates.

SOL MUSSEY, ASA,

Director, Medicare and Medicaid Cost Estimates Group.

ESTIMATED LONG-RANGE FINANCIAL IMPACTS OF SELECTED HI PROPOSALS

(Expressed as a percent of HI taxable payroll)

	Change in actuarial balance ¹			Actuarial balance of HI trust fund		
	25-yr period (1998–2022)	50-yr period (1998–2047)	75-yr period (1998–2072)	25-yr period (1998–2022)	50-yr period (1998–2047)	75-yr period (1998–2072)
Current law				–0.73	–1.61	–2.10
Proposal:						
Hold HI growth to increase in enrollment +GDP/capita	0.31	0.77	1.06	–0.42	–0.84	–1.04
Reinstitute and expand Center of Excellence programs eff. 1/1/00 ²	0.00	0.00	0.00	–0.73	–1.61	–2.10
Hospital PPS freeze 2000–2002	0.35	0.48	0.55	–0.38	–1.13	–1.55
Buy-in at 62	0.00	0.01	0.01	–0.73	–1.60	–2.09
Increase HI tax rate to 3.2% from 2.9%	0.25	0.28	0.28	–0.48	–1.33	–1.82
Donate half tobacco settlement to HI fund ³	0.10	0.10	0.10	–0.63	–1.51	–2.00

¹ Positive figures represent an improvement in the actuarial balance, reflecting either a reduction in expenditures or an increase in revenues. ² Included in the President's 1999 Budget. ³ We used 10-year estimates provided by the Joint Committee on Taxation and extrapolated them in the long-range.

Note: Estimates are based on the intermediate set of assumptions from the 1998 Trustees Report. Office of the Actuary, Health Care Financing Administration, 15-May-98.

CONGRATULATIONS TO SENIOR
AIRMAN ANDRE L. WALKER

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 22, 1998

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to bring to the attention of the House of Representatives and the American public the distinguished honor of a fellow Missourian. Senior Airman Andre L. Walker, of St. Louis, was recently chosen as the Air National Guard Airman of the Year.

Senior Airman Andre L. Walker is a Satcom/Wideband Communications Specialist assigned to the 239th Combat Communications Squadron as a TRC-170 tactical communications terminal crew member, Missouri Air National Guard Base, Lambert Field, St. Louis, Missouri. He is 31 years old and was born in St. Louis, Missouri. He attended McCluer Senior High School and was a member of the school football team and the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA).

After graduation from high school, Airman Walker was locally employed while attending S. Louis Community College's Florissant Valley and Forest Park campuses. He graduated with honors from Forest Park Community College with an Associate of Arts degree in Business Administration. He then went on to continue his education at the University of Missouri, St. Louis campus.

In July 1995 Airman Walker enlisted in the Missouri Air National Guard, and was sent to Basic Military Training in September of the same year. He was selected as flight leader (Dorm Chief) and his flight had the overall highest score in intrasquadron competition. After completing BMT, Airman Walker attended Satcom/Wideband Specialist Training at Keesler AFB, Mississippi, where he was a student leader and member of the drill team in his squadron.

After graduating from technical school, he volunteered to assist a Civil Engineering squadron install fiber optics lines on Spangdahlem Air Base, Spangdahlem, Germany. Airman Walker was recognized as an outstanding performer for his efforts during the project. In August 1996 Airman Walker volunteered to serve in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in support of Operation Southern Watch. He received an Air Force Commendation Medal for his performance there.

Airman Walker returned home in January 1997 and assisted the 131st Fighter Wing in its Mobility Warehouse Reorganization Project in which he and his team completed the task in eighty percent of its estimated time. His team received recognition for its Superior Performance. He subsequently served as an augmentee for the 107th Air Control Squadron during their Operational Readiness Exercise, and afterward he returned to the Middle East for a second tour. Upon his return home in June 1997 he assisted his squadron in preparing for their upcoming Operational Readiness Exercise until August 1997. After the August Operational Readiness Exercise, he was recognized as a Superior Performer by his squadron for his efforts during the Operational Readiness Exercise. Airman Walker subsequently returned to Phoenix, Arizona, in Sep-

tember to assist the 107th Air Control Squadron in their Operational Readiness Inspection. While there, he and two others discovered and extinguished a brush fire on the Fort Huachuca Army Base, preventing potential injury to military personnel and equipment. Airman Walker was again recommended for the Air Force Commendation medal for his efforts there, confirmation of his decoration is pending.

His military awards include the Air Force Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Joint Forces Expeditionary Medal, and Air Force Overseas Short Ribbon.

Mr. Speaker, I am certain that the Members of the House will join me in congratulating Andre L. Walker as the Air National Guard's Airman of the Year.

FLOOR STATEMENT ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ACT

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 22, 1998

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the "Metropolitan Washington Regional Transportation Act" with my colleague, Senator CHUCK ROBB, to address the traffic congestion problems within the metropolitan Washington D.C. region. We now have the second longest average commuting time in the nation.

According to the Greater Washington Board of Trade, this increased commuting time and congestion costs each man, woman, and child in the region more than \$800 per year in lost time, wasted fuel, and environmental damage. Long commutes and traffic congestion have also become quality of life issues to area residents, robbing many families of the one commodity Washingtonians never seem to have enough of—time. Some drivers facing a longer commute have even become a safety hazard as they race recklessly to cut a precious few minutes from their daily commute. Last year's tragedies on I-95 and the George Washington Parkway are still fresh on everyone's mind. For those who lack cars, the distance between employment opportunities and affordable housing has grown more and more difficult to traverse. Our economic prosperity and quality of life hinge on improving our congestion problem.

Unfortunately, as we look to the future the traffic situation only grows worse. Even with increase in federal funds Virginia will receive under legislation reauthorizing federal surface transportation programs, this region will still fall seriously short of meeting the growing demand for transportation improvements. For the period of 1990 through 2020, this region can expect both a 43 percent increase in population and 43 percent increase in employment. This growth and increased dependency on the automobile is expected to increase by 79 percent the number of vehicle miles traveled in the region by 2020.

The Board of Trade estimates that transportation spending is expected to fall short of the

region's transportation needs by more than \$500 million annually. Any solution to current and future congestion demands strategic investment in both our road and mass transit system. It demands better land use and planning decisions and better interjurisdictional cooperation. And it also demands that this region come together and raise additional revenue to finance priority transportation projects that will provide immediate congestion relief.

It may not be a popular idea, but we have to do more, and we have to do it ourselves. Federal and state taxes levied on our citizens will always take a "haircut" on before spending any of the balance back in this region. It seems to me, that the only way to ensure that we get 100 percent of funds we need is to raise more ourselves and spend them locally. It is also a process that ensures that the money gets spent where we determine it is needed most. I think the key to public support is identifying a list of priority projects that could be completed on a fast track providing the public with the assurances that their additional tax dollars will buy specific congestion relief. A large number of urban communities have already established a dedicated funding source for their transit systems.

In the past, leaders from this region have shared a vision and worked successfully together to address important transportation needs, through such institutions as the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. We need a similar vision to carry us forward another 30 years.

The Metropolitan Washington Regional Transportation Act will help us craft this vision. The legislation we are introducing has five key elements: (1) It provides a new option to help the metropolitan Washington region more effectively address its transportation needs; (2) it empowers the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board to consult with the metropolitan Washington region jurisdictions and the public to achieve consensus on a list of critical transportation projects and a funding mechanism that are needed to address the growing congestion crisis in the region but cannot be funded within the current and forecasted federal, state and local funding levels for such projects; (3) it establishes a Corporation with the power to accept revenue and issue debt to provide short-term funding for projects that have been agreed to by the region; (4) it grants consent to the metropolitan Washington region jurisdictions to enter into an interstate compact or agreement that would help meet the region's long-term transportation needs; and (5) it provides \$60 million in matching federal grants as an incentive to encourage the creation of the federal corporation.

This legislation provides a framework under which a regional transportation needs could be addressed. It requires consultation with state and local officials at every level and in an effort to win state support, the legislation preciously guards state control of both the corporation and the authority through veto power.